

Message Text

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42

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0013

S E C R E T CAIRO 1842

NODIS

CHEROKEE

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG US MILL

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN AIR FORCE MORALE

REF: CAIRO 1793

1. IN LIGHT FAHMY'S COMMENT RE ALLEGED DISCONTENT IN EGYPTIAN AIR FORCE (EAF) BECAUSE OF ENFORCED IDLENESS, I ASKED DAO TO PROVIDE HIS BEST ESTIMATE OF PRESENT EAF ACTIVITIES AND MORALE. IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT OUR ABILITY TO OBTAIN TRUE READING OF EAF JUNIOR AND MIDDLE GRADE ATTITUDES IS PERFORCE LIMITED. AS WITH OTHER ARMS OF EGYPTIAN MILITARY, GOE CAREFULLY INSULATES EAF AND RESTRICTS CONTACTS WITH FOREIGN ATTACHES. WITH THIS CAVEAT, FOLLOWING DAO ESTIMATE IS SUBMITTED:

2. THERE IS SUFFICIENT CAUSE TO PRESUME AN UNDETERMINED LEVEL OF DISCONTENT EXISTS AMONG AIRCERES OF THE EAF. WE HAVE GOOD INFORMATION TO THE EFFECT THAT THE PROGRAMMED FLYING HOURS FOR COMBAT AIRCRAFT EQUATE TO ABOUT 6.5 HOURS A MONTH PER PILOT. THIS AMONT OF FLYING IS INSUFFICIENT TO KEEP EVEN THE BEST TRAINED AND MOST EXPERIENCED PILOTS PROFICIENT. WHETHER THIS IS A NEW LOW, OR HAS BEEN SUSTAINED FOR SOMETIME, DOES NOT ALTER THE

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SITUATION IN WHICH THE PILOTS, WHO ARE AMONG THE

BRIGHTEST OF THE YOUNG ELITE IN EGYPT, CAN PERCEIVE
THEIR POSITION VIS-A-VIS ISRAEL BECOMING WORSE DAILY.
MOREOVER, THE IMPACT OF RECENT INFORMATION THAT THE
SOVIETS HAVE DENIED EGYPT MIG-21 ENGINE OVERHAUL
FACILITIES IN THE SOVIET UNION WILL FURTHER
EXACERBATE THE PROBLEM. IT IS PROBABLY FAIR TO
ESTIMATE THAT THE EAF CAN SEE THE GROUNDING OF THE
MIG-21 FLEET, WHICH IS THE BACKBONE OF THEIR STRIKE
FORCE, IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE.
EILTS

SECRET

NNN

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